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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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27 JUL 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: The President

FROM: George Bush

SUBJECT: Status of Backfire Performance Estimates

1. Brent Scowcroft has requested that I provide you with a status report on CIA's current work on the performance of the Soviet Backfire bomber. Since last year, CIA has been performing an exhaustive reassessment of all available data bearing on this question. CIA's preliminary findings are that the radius and range of the Backfire at subsonic speeds are significantly lower than previously estimated.

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5. CIA is still working to validate its preliminary findings--in

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6. I have directed the intelligence community's interagency committee on weapon systems to review the technical aspects of all of this work so that I can report to you and other consumers on the basis of the best available professional advice. I believe this can be done in early September, though I do not anticipate that the community will be fully agreed.

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7. Please bear in mind that options remain open to the Soviets for modifying the Backfire so as to increase its unrefueled radius and range capabilities

/s/ George Bush

George Bush

Enclosure

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